

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2009**

RE: LABOR DEPARTMENT BUDGET – APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Presented by: Joyce A. Wojtas-Lobbyist jawojtas@myway.com
Mechanical Contractors Association of CT (MCAC)
And Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 777**

The MCAC and Local 777 oppose the elimination of the apprenticeship training program from under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labor and the subsequent transfer to the proposed Middle College System.

This program is probably one of the best in the country and provides the administration for the training and job opportunities for many people, both young and old, who want to work in the construction and manufacturing trades. The program is run efficiently by some of the most dedicated individuals in public service and for all practical purposes, it is working. As the old saying goes, “IF IT AIN’T BROKE, DON’T FIX IT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Thousands of people have successfully completed training and are employed in the construction industry today because of the efforts of the Apprenticeship Program Manager and his staff, who work closely with the construction trades and the contractors who participate in the training, to keep this program on course.

The apprenticeship fees are currently dedicated to the program. Doubling the fees and diverting them to the general fund is a disservice to the participants in the program, both employees and employers. The apprenticeship program should not become just another “cash cow”.

The program does not belong in a Middle College System. It will undoubtedly end up as a low priority in the educational arena which currently favors “the college education route” for our young people. The construction industry needs people in the trades as we prepare for programs to revitalize our economy. The Labor Department Apprenticeship Training Program is ready, willing, and able to provide the assistance to help in a cost effective manner.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.